



Scoping Information

Proposed Roanan Corp/Hyder Ventures Riverside Mine Project



What is scoping?

Scoping is one of the earliest steps outlined by the National Environmental Policy Act to gather internal and external input that will help focus the environmental analysis. Public comments provided during scoping are used by the Forest Service to identify and address potential issues, concerns, and opportunities associated with a proposed project or activity.

What is the Forest Service proposing?

The U.S. Forest Service is responding to Roanan Corp/Hyder Ventures' submitted plan of operation in the Hyder Mining District near Hyder, Alaska.

The U.S. Forest Service proposes to authorize the Roanan Corp/Hyder Ventures locatable mineral exploration uses and activities on National Forest System lands near the Riverside Mine. The project includes minor trail building (325 long by 13 feet wide) on National Forest System lands to create new access to 2 proposed drill site locations. The majority of the project is located on private property.

A skid mounted B-10 hydraulic diamond drill will be used for the drill program. Surface disturbance will be minimal and confined to collar area of holes. Riparian setback buffers from water courses will be observed. Drill holes will be beyond 100 feet of any stream. Core holes will be a maximum of 300 feet deep. Drill crews will operate 15 hours per day. Drill rigs will be powered by diesel power generators, which are enclosed where possible to reduce noise. Redundant fuel storage and spill prevention, containment and response measures will be employed, such as providing secondary containment and containment berms. Absorbent material for potential spills will be kept on site.

Water for drilling will be drawn from local water sources with appropriate fish screen measures to prevent potential impacts to fish. The water used for drilling will be recirculated to reduce overall consumption and reduce the amount of additives required during the drilling process. Non-toxic, non-caustic agents may be added to the water to lubricate the drill bit and maximize flushing of cuttings from the hole. At no time will drilling fluids be allowed to enter open water ways. All solid refuse will be removed from the drill site on a daily basis.

Project implementation is anticipated to begin in April and would continue through the end of October 2021.

Why?

The statutory right to explore and develop locatable minerals on Federal public land, including right of access, is based on the 1872 Mining Act, as amended. Exploration is a crucial step in the location and development of mineral resources. The Forest Service has limited discretionary authority over development of locatable minerals. The requirement to authorize is not discretionary, but does drive ecological compliance among operators.

Location and Existing Condition

The proposed project is located in the Hyder Mining District near Hyder, Alaska within the Ketchikan Misty Fjords Ranger District on the Tongass National Forest and adjacent private property. The proposed project consists of 8 patented claims (private property) covering approximately 124 acres and 4 unpatented claims covering approximately 62 acres on National Forest System lands.

The project is located within 1 mile of the Titan trail a USFS hiking trail and within 2 miles of the Fish Creek Wildlife Observation site.

There are numerous cultural resources located near and within the project area. The majority of the historic sites are comprised by abandoned prospects, mines, and other mining associated features.

Forest Plan Consistency

The proposed project is located within the Scenic Viewshed land use designation (LUD). The 2016 Tongass Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) includes LUD-specific direction (Chapter 3) and forest-wide direction (Chapters 2, 4 and 5) that includes, but is not limited to the following:

LUD-specific Direction

MINERALS AND GEOLOGY (Forest Plan, Page 3-106)

Minerals and Geology Administration: MG2

Forest Lands Open to Mineral Entry

- A. Forest lands within this LUD are open to mineral exploration and development.

Preliminary Issues

The Forest Service interdisciplinary team identified that the proposed project may affect cultural resources and recreation experiences.

Environmental Analysis

The environmental analysis will consider public scoping comments as well as those provided by the project interdisciplinary team.

The project falls within a category of actions which typically do not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the human environment and, therefore, can be categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental impact statement or an environmental assessment. Specifically, this decision may be categorically excluded under 36 CFR 220.6 (e)(8): *Short-term (1 year or less) mineral, energy, or geophysical investigations and their incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of low standard road, or use of existing roads.*

Responsible Official

The Responsible Official for the decision is Shane Walker, District Ranger, of Ketchikan Misty Fjords Ranger District, Tongass National Forest.

Decision to be Made

The decision for this project must describe how the proposed Roanan Corp/Hyder Ventures Riverside Mine Project is consistent with applicable plan direction in the Forest Plan. After conducting and

reviewing the environmental analysis, including public involvement and interdisciplinary team input, the Responsible Official will make the following decisions based on the environmental analysis:

1. Whether the proposed project will proceed as proposed or modified to address issues;
2. What specific resource protection or mitigation measures or monitoring should be implemented as part of the project; and
3. Whether the project has extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action that warrant further analysis and documentation in an Environmental Assessment or an Environmental Impact Statement.

A supporting record is required and the decision to proceed will be documented in a decision memo.

How to Comment

Your input is important in analyzing the proposed project. They will help the interdisciplinary team identify and address potential issues, concerns, and opportunities associated with the proposed project.

Please email your comments to aaron.steuerwald@usda.gov and include *Roanan Corp/Hyder Ventures Riverside Mine Project* in the subject line. Written comments can also be mailed to Ketchikan Misty Fjords Ranger District, Attn: Roanan Corp/Hyder Ventures Riverside Mine Project, 3031 Tongass Avenue, Ketchikan, AK 99901, or hand delivered to the Ketchikan Misty Fjords Ranger Station, Monday-Friday between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., except for Federal holidays. For more information, contact Aaron Steuerwald, Team Leader at (907) 228-4123 or aaron.steuerwald@usda.gov.

It is the responsibility of individual or entity to submit comments by the close of the comment period.

The comment period is 14 days from the date of this letter. The time period for the opportunity to comment shall not be extended. Specific written comments should include the following:

1. Name and current physical mailing address (a telephone number is optional);
2. Your organization name if commenting as a representative;
3. The project title, *Roanan Corp/Hyder Ventures Riverside Mine Project*.

An electronic username is insufficient for identification of an individual or entity. An email address alone is not sufficient.

Electronic, written, and hand delivered comments will be accepted for 14 days from the date of the scoping letter. To be most helpful, comments should be received no later than January 4, 2021. All information including the names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record and available for public inspection.

For more information about the project visit the project webpage at:

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=56963>

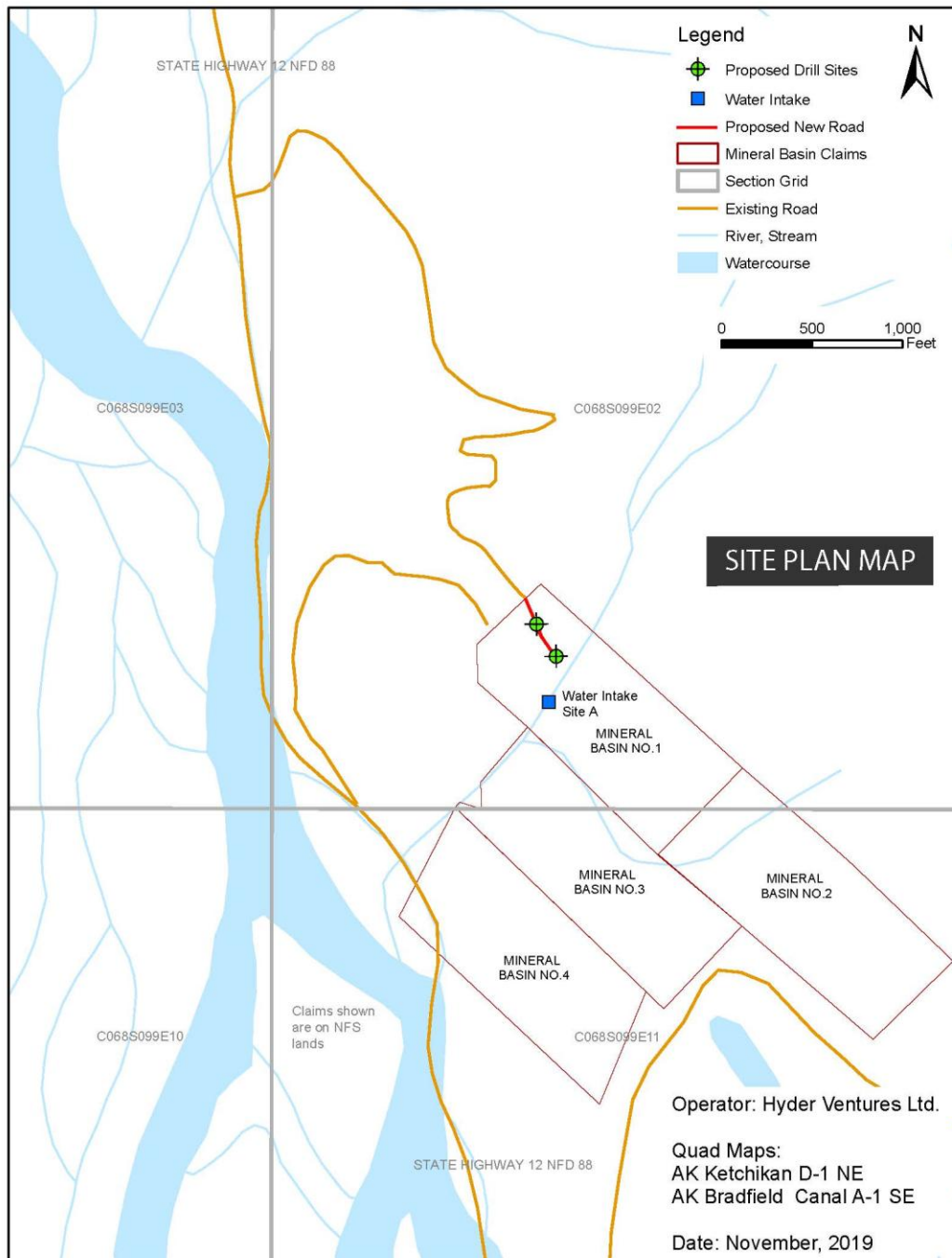


Figure 1. Proposed Roanan Corp/Hyder Ventures Riverside Mine Project